



# Town of Groton - Public Works

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Public Works  
Administration  
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## Meeting Minutes

### Permanent School Building Committee

**Chairman Rick DeMatto, Vice-Chairman W. Gordon Lange, Robert J. Austin-LaFrance, Richard Monteiro, Robert Morrison, David Russell, and John Webster.**

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Thursday, May 19, 2005

7:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

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#### Regular Meeting

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#### 1. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Chairman Rick DeMatto, Robert J. Austin-LaFrance, Gordon Lange, Richard Monteiro and David Russell

Members Absent: Robert Morrison and John Webster

*Staff: Rick Norris, Project Manager - School Construction, Wes Greenleaf, Director of School Buildings and Grounds, and Lori Hammett, Recorder.*

*The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm.*

#### 2. RECEIPT OF CITIZEN'S PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

*None.*

#### 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

##### a) May 5, 2005

*A motion was made by Webster, seconded by Lange, to accept the meeting minutes of May 5, 2005 as written. Approved unanimously.*

*CORRECTION MOTION TO ACCEPT MINUTES OF MAY 5, 2005 WAS MADE BY MONTEIRO.*

#### 4. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS (other than Subcommittee reports)

##### (a) PSBC Members

*Mr. DeMatto received a letter from the Town Clerk indicating that Mr. Webster has been re-appointed to the PSBC with a term expiring September 29, 2007.*

*Mr. LaFrance commented that his term has already expired and he has never received that type of notification. Mr. Norris indicated he will check into this matter.*

##### (b) Department of Public Works staff

*Mr. Norris mentioned that the committee had talked about briefing the Town Council and Board of Education about the school project. The meeting will be held June 23, 2005 at 7:00 pm. The format will be a special PSBC meeting with an invitation to Town Council and Board of Education (BOE).*

*URS finished field work on the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment at the Northeast Academy. They also performed the hazmat inspection in preparation for demolition of the building. Reports should be completed within a week or so.*

*In light of BRAC, the Town's position will be to continue the school projects as planned and upon completion evaluate the program and future education needs of the Town.*

*Mr. DeMatto commented that the role of the PSBC is to build the buildings they were assigned.*

**(c) Board of Education staff**

*Wes Greenleaf has been receiving a lot of important input. The BRAC position is important. He stated that when the BOE designed the first phase, they took into account those schools that do not have a significant number of military dependents. The biggest impact in the district is the elementary schools (Charles Barnum, Mary Morrison, and Pleasant Valley) and, to a lesser degree, Fitch Middle School.*

*If BRAC is successful and the base closes, the Town will have to recover. To recover, good schools are important. The biggest impact is to the lower grades as most of the military families move out of Town after the children finish elementary school. BRAC will not impact the schools we are dealing with right now; however, there may be real savings in the future.*

*Mr. Lange commented that there is a \$300 million construction project in Navy housing and that it is going to continue so there is no need to worry about backfilling for schools.*

*Mr. DeMatto asked the status on naming of schools. We Greenleaf replied that the Eastern Point School will become the Catherine Kolnaski Elementary School, the Freeman Hathaway School will become the Northeast Academy, with perhaps a wing named Freeman Hathaway.*

*Mr. DeMatto made note that we will not be pursuing the theme concept.*

**(d) Jeter, Cook and Jepson**

*Greg Smolley welcomed Steve Kononchik and Peter Manning from Gilbane. JCJ is looking forward to having the whole team on board.*

*We will soon be stepping from schematic design to design development. The interim archeologist report came back with recommendations for no further action. The primary sites in question are insignificant and had been determined as such in 1992.*

*The interim traffic study indicates that Ann Avenue should not be used for access to the Northeast Academy, due to sight distances and stopping distances. It is recommended to enter from Oslo Street. The final report for this issue, as well as the traffic study for Fitch High School and Kolnaski School, will be available on June 2. Traffic study includes the school as a whole and how it fits into local traffic, then looking at its heaviest loading, then at internal site circulation.*

*Mr. DeMatto asked if there are any surprises from the cemetery adjacent to the high school. Greg Smolley replied it is a very orderly cemetery. The walls in the Merritt property are about 200 years old. The documentation has served its purpose.*

*Greg Smolley stated the topographical surveys are done and the wetlands surveys are completed. The property line surveys will be done within 2 weeks. There may have been a prior non-conforming use at the high school and would need to be resolved. He is also working on geotechnical issues.*

*Jamie Cali stated we need to finalize construction staging access at the high school with Gilbane. He looked at keeping the building further west, as going further east creates problems with the wetlands. They have not worked out the final location of mechanical spaces, have introduced a greenhouse, and have reconfigured the lightwell.*

*A question was asked as to whether or not the issue of putting the mechanical systems on the roof has been decided. Options were talked about with staff. The recommendation will be presented in the Schematic Design (SD) report.*

*JCJ and the mechanical consultant toured the school and determined two spots for the possible*

*location of the boiler plant: auto mechanic wing or in the current administration area. The lower level and upper level of the planned addition have remained essentially the same. The greenhouse added to the lightwell would be used as part of the science learning experience.*

*JCJ presented massing models. Brick and precast concrete materials will be incorporated. Discussion followed between members and JCJ regarding the elevation drawings. Talked about pitching roof away from the building and towards the building and how each option presents a different feel. The idea for north end and south end main floor areas of buildings is to maximize areas for large groups of people that enter/exit the building - large glass structure, lots of light. The front elevation is most prominent and will be studied the most.*

*Discussion followed regarding the utility tunnels under the high school. Wes Greenleaf explained where the tunnels are located.*

*Jim Hoagland of JCJ spoke of Northeast Academy. Discussions with staff indicate a desire to move the media center into the heart of the school. The building was pushed back on the site, to the north. Grading needs to be done to make the school fit on the site in a logical way. There is room for a kindergarten and Pre-k playscape. Vehicular circulation also is being looked at. Parent drop off and bus drop off needs to be separated - this is absolutely critical. This traffic pattern can be seen at the Westwoods School, which is a school the committee talked of visiting. There is a desire to have people not coming to the school to be able to turn around without actually going far onto the school property. There needs to be room for 9-10 full size buses. Behind the school will be two playscapes.*

*The security issue was discussed when planning the building for passive security.*

*Mr. Lange asked about the placement of the media center in the middle of the building. Mr. Greenleaf commented that the media center is the hub, the basis for education. It will have computers, daily announcements, the center of all information that is disseminated. Community would not use the media center.*

*Mr. Monteiro asked if any thought was given to a partial covered walkway. JCJ responded that there had been no talk about that.*

*Jim Hoagland talked about the clusters, with the younger children having direct access to the nurse area. The building shape will help it stay clear of the wetlands buffer. Pre K and Kindergarten classrooms will have individual bathrooms. Grades 2-5 will have lockers, Pre K through 1 will have cubbies in the rooms. A concern of staff is being able to supervise the playscape areas. Single access door to the grades 2-5 play area to control and supervise students is anticipated. Question was asked if media center will be two-story. Answer: It will be a two-story volume.*

*The building will have southern exposure, bringing sun in the front part of the school all day. Question was asked as to what staff thinks of having music and art rooms so far from Pre-K rooms. Answer: it keeps the noise level down, away from the teaching spaces and Pre-K does not use those rooms very often.*

*9:50 pm - recess*

*9:55 pm - meeting resumes*

*Jim Hoagland talked about the King Property. He talked of creating a natural separation with trees between elementary school and potential middle school by creating a ring road around a central knoll. The difference between the two new elementary schools is access. Functionally, the*

*buildings are the same. The ring road is a different concept and will be discussed with the educators.*

*Mr. LaFrance asked what is basis for siting the building where it is, as opposed to a more level stretch of land. The flatter part of the site may be needed for a middle school construction which requires larger playing fields. Less grading would be necessary for the fields. Another issue was power lines. They could remain where they are and be dealt with as part of a middle school project.*

*Mr. DeMatto questioned whether we are on schedule. Answer: yes. Greg Smolley will discuss more about the schedule for the next few weeks at the end of the meeting.*

*Question: have we discarded the idea of the entrance off Poquonnock Road across from Lorraine Drive? Yes, it crosses wetlands. He again mentioned that this school floor plan is a mirror image of Northeast Academy. Shape of the building fits into contours nicely. Minimal excavation will be necessary. There is only a 6 foot difference in grade, that can be made up with fill. Also presented was a different layout with a tighter footprint to see if there was any efficiency in centering all core facilities. Question: Is the building closer to the railroad tracks? Yes, but is moved further from the power lines. Will the students be watching trains from the classrooms? No, they won't be able to see them because of the lower elevation of the tracks.*

*Greg Smolley made his closing remarks. A sample of a schematic design report was passed around. This report will pull together all information discussed thus far and set ground rules from which design will be developed. The building program will be included as well as system narratives (technology, security, etc). Description of design, pictures, budget estimate, and the schedule to move forward were discussed.*

*At the June 2 meeting the schematic design (SD) report will be discussed.*

*June 16 meeting the completed SD report will be presented and distributed.*

*June 23, a presentation to the Town Council and Board of Education will be made at a special PSBC meeting. Mr. DeMatto requested the meeting be televised. Mr. Norris responded that he will make arrangements for it.*

*Mr. Smolley stated the Design Development will take about 3 months.*

*Mr. Smolley suggests going back to once a month meetings when this next series is completed.*

*Mr. DeMatto asked all members to look at their summer schedules to determine whether any meetings need to be re-scheduled. He asked staff to help coordinate.*

**(e) Gilbane**

*Steve Kononchik of Gilbane commented that he and Peter Manning will be on the project until its completed. Going forward, Gilbane will begin working on a cost estimate, based on the conceptual plans. After June 2, they will look at square foot estimate process. They will meet with JCJ before doing the estimate. During the design phase, they will look at constructibility issues. Peter Adamo will also be heavily involved.*

**5. RECEIPT OF SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

**(a) Model School Committee**

*The visit to model schools did not occur. PSBC appreciates staff organizing it. A decision was made to hold off on rescheduling the tour.*

**6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- 7. NEW BUSINESS
- 8. OTHER BUSINESS
- 9. ADJOURNMENT

*A motion was made by Mr. Lange, seconded by Mr. LaFrance, to adjourn at 9:36 p.m.*